



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HOME ECONOMICS

ACHIEVING UN SDG #2 – “ZERO HUNGER”

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BOARD ON HUMAN SCIENCES

October 2018

The Board on Human Sciences (BoHS), an association of home economics administrators in higher education headquartered in Washington, DC, acknowledges hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity to be critical threats to a sustainable world. A lack of access to sufficient, nutritious food destabilizes countries, endangers national security, compromises individual and economic productivity, and robs our youngest generation of opportunities for a healthy, prosperous future.

BoHS endorses the food and nutrition security framework presented in *The Challenge of Change: Harnessing University Discovery, Engagement, and Learning to Achieve Food and Nutrition Security*, published by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) in 2017. In order to meet the grand challenge of feeding a population of over 9 billion people by 2050, it is essential that policymakers extend the focus beyond merely increasing yields to produce more food to examining all aspects of the food system. The broader context, both locally and globally, is where human scientists plays a pivotal role in addressing: “nutrition, food safety, food loss, economic costs, individual behaviors, incentive structures, and societal factors which affect not only production (or *availability*), but also *access* and *utilization*.” (*The Challenge of Change*, 2017).

Many North American universities have made significant strides in addressing food and nutrition security. However, going forward, it is clear that working together as a collective can have exponential impact in teaching, research, outreach, and student engagement. Spearheaded by the College of Human Sciences at Auburn University, students at more than 300 institutions have joined the *Universities Fighting World Hunger* grassroots movement, and more than 100 presidents/chancellors have responded to a call to action by signing a Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH) commitment to contribute to the following goals:

- Build and strengthen a university food and nutrition security network by sharing information and best practices across institutions in teaching, research, outreach, and student engagement.
- Develop a new generation of enlightened global citizens who will advance the social good through “disruptive” critical thinking, collaborative multi-disciplinary problem-solving, and a fervent commitment to ending hunger.
- Engage faculty across disciplines and institutions in developing and implementing a strategy to solve hunger and malnutrition.
- Create public and political will to end hunger by collaborating with and disseminating relevant information and resources to multi-sector partners and constituents in business, government, and civil society.
- Empower students to meet the grand challenge of ending hunger through informed awareness, effective advocacy, and strategic action on their own campuses and collectively across campuses.

Teaching

Because they are exceedingly complex issues, every discipline in the university has a role to play in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. Raising awareness and educating the next generation about this grand challenge may hold the greatest impact for creating long-term sustainable solutions. Because human sciences is mission-driven and interdisciplinary in nature, it is the perfect place to offer courses on cross-cutting issues like food and nutrition security, as well as the underlying root causes such as poverty, racial bias, gender and educational inequities, health disparities, climate change, population control, etc. Whether a small unit, a full semester course, a minor, or a major is devoted to these topics, students begin to see how the complexities of the issues unfold. Problem-based learning strategies can spark critical thinking, teamwork, and innovative approaches to creative outcomes. In addition, study abroad and/or international internships, especially in developing countries, can build human capacity and provide students with life-changing experiences that expand their knowledge and skills related to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

Research

As a result of the interdisciplinary nature of home economics, human sciences research is critical to addressing the complexities of hunger and malnutrition. Human sciences research is instrumental in the surveillance of hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity, and nutrition insecurity across the globe, as well as identification of factors contributing to these complex issues. Human sciences research also is contributing to the development and evaluation of innovative, sustainable strategies necessary to prevent, treat, and solve hunger.

Many international and national research efforts demonstrate the importance of human sciences research. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy draws on expertise of top U.S. universities and developing country research institutions to tackle policies influencing farm and off-farm parts of the agrifood system. Two additional USAID Innovation Labs focus on Collaborative Research on Nutrition in Africa and in Asia. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health seeks fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through its Prevention Research Centers (PRCs), funds 26 centers across the U.S. to conduct innovative research on applied public health interventions. Further, the National Nutrition Research Roadmap 2016-2021 encourages all relevant federal departments and agencies to coordinate human nutrition research programs to identify solutions to critical, nutrition-related, chronic disease prevention and health promotion issues.

As a result of these opportunities, as well as many others, a tremendous number of public-private partnerships with academia, government, and non-profit entities are addressing hunger and malnutrition around the globe. To capitalize on the multitude of efforts addressing hunger in both human sciences and agriculture, the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) initiative is a worldwide movement to make agriculture and nutrition data available, accessible, and usable for unrestricted consumption worldwide to deal with world food and nutrition security. Human sciences research has contributed to some of the greatest advancements in addressing international hunger and malnutrition and will continue to play a critical role in solving the world's most pressing problems.

Outreach

Through campus-community partnerships, individuals, families, and communities are gaining skills, knowledge, and support to improve food and nutrition security. One particular partnership, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) is authorized through the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS) and mobilized using contracts between state agencies and the Land-grant University (LGU) System. The goal of SNAP-Ed through LGUs is to provide educational programs; messaging; and policy, systems, and environmental interventions to increase the likelihood that people eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget. In 2017, 52 LGUs reported receipt of \$176,792,834 to implement SNAP-Ed programs within their states. In 2015, collectively LGUs reported reaching more than 2.5 million people through SNAP-Ed (SNAP-Ed within the Land-grant University System, 2017). SNAP-Ed is only one example of how institutions of higher education can play a key role in creating public and political will to address domestic and international food and nutrition security.

End Child Hunger in Alabama (ECHA) is a statewide multi-sector initiative comprised of key state leaders, as well as representatives from USDA/FNS, addressing the critical issues of hunger and food insecurity facing more than one in four of Alabama's children and youth. ECHA is working to ensure that Alabama's young citizens have access to a variety of nutritious foods that promote healthy growth and development necessary for physical well-being and educational achievement in childhood and a skilled and productive labor force in adulthood. Its goals include: 1) increase Alabama families' economic stability; 2) cultivate a strong regional food system; 3) build public will to end child hunger; 4) improve the food assistance safety net for Alabama's children; and 5) support community action to enhance children's health and prevent obesity and chronic disease.

Student Engagement

Student activism related to hunger takes many forms, including hunger awareness (knowing about hunger) and consciousness-raising (caring about it), advocacy (influencing policymakers and others to act), action (food drives, fundraising, etc.), and academic initiatives (class projects, competitions, innovations). These activities are carried out informally, as individuals or groups, or within student organizations such as Bread for the World, ONE, Universities Fighting World Hunger, The Campus Kitchens Project, or any number of other humanitarian or professional campus chapters (e.g., dietetics, global studies, design, human development, etc.).

President Janet Napolitano has given unprecedented leadership in the area of campus food security at all 10 campuses of the University of California System. Funded through the UC Nutrition Policy Institute, led by Director and Cooperative Extension Specialist Dr. Lorrene Ritchie, an initial grant of \$75,000 was allocated to each campus to monitor food security among its students, as well as to enhance access and promote projects for preventative measures (The Challenge of Change, 2017). In related work, the Hunger Solutions Institute at Auburn University partnered with The Campus Kitchens Project and The Rockefeller Foundation on a campus food waste initiative that produced a toolkit, *Trash Hunger, Not Food*, available online at <http://campusfoodwaste.org>.